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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEW MATERIALS REMIND DRIVERS SCHOOL BUSES ARE LIKE TRAFFIC SIGNALS *Posters, flyers distributed across Michigan for National School Bus Safety Week*

School buses are the safest way for students to travel to school, but some motorists put themselves and children at risk by disobeying or ignoring the lights on a bus. National School Bus Safety Week, Oct. 15-21, is an opportunity for those on the road to pay extra attention to school bus safety.

To make sure drivers know what to do when approaching a bus that has activated its lights, the Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning (OHSP) has developed a poster and flyer that simplifies the school bus stop law and reminds the public that "school buses are like traffic signals."

Produced with assistance from the Motor Carrier Division of the Michigan Department of State Police and the Michigan Department of Education, the poster has been sent to every K-12 school in the state, as well as school districts' transportation centers, in advance of School Bus Safety Week. Coordinating flyers are also available through OHSP's distribution center.

"School buses are a safe and effective way to transport children to school, but they are made even safer when everyone follows the law," said Michael L. Prince, OHSP division director. "If motorists remember that school buses are like traffic signals, chances are greater that children will get on and off the bus safely."

The new materials compare the lights on a school bus to traffic signals. Motorists should always:

- Prepare to stop when a slowing bus has its overhead yellow lights flashing.
- Come to a complete stop at least 20 feet away from the bus when its overhead red lights are flashing.
- Proceed with caution when hazard warning lights, located near the headlights and taillights, are flashing.

Approximately 17,800 school vehicles in Michigan transport more than 850,000 children each school day and travel nearly 10 million miles a year, according to Michigan State Police's Motor Carrier Division Bus Inspection Unit. There were four fatalities and 315 injuries in school bus crashes reported in Michigan in 2005. None of the fatalities were school bus passengers.

Students are nearly eight times safer riding in a school bus than with their own parents and guardians in cars, according to a 2002 study from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

To view a copy of the poster, please visit www.michigan.gov/ohsp and click on "School Bus Safety Poster."

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